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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses competencies needed for teaching culturally different children. First, competencies are discussed that enable the teacher to gain community support and maneuver within the students' environment in the community. Proficiencies needed for teaching language, history, and religion are described. Second, a preservice instructional program is described which focuses on giving a total picture of the Indian child in the home and school environment. Seven general competencies and several specific competencies in the areas of instruction, community, and student-teacher relationships for the teacher intern are listed. Third, 13 competencies for teaching in a multicultural society are presented which include recognizing that all cultures have the same human needs, helping students understand their values and attitudes, and instilling in students an appreciation of human diversity. Finally, an ideal competency-based teacher education (CBTE) program for teaching in a culturally diverse society is described, and seven basic characteristics of CBTE are discussed. The author concludes that the goal of CBTE should be to provide the kind of trainees for differentiated staff positions who are supportive of the innovative changes needed for effective educational development. An 8-item bibliography is included. (PD)

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COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHERS OF CULTURALLY DIFFERENT CHILDREN:

TEACHER COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHING NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN

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Competencies for Teachers of Culturally Different Children: Teacher Competencies for Teaching Native American Children

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Introduction

This is a culturally diversed nation. Many people heretofore have seen this as a divisive force within this country thus adhered to the "melting pot philosophy" in an attempt to obscure these differencies. Now many of these culturally distinct groups have proclaimed non-acceptance of amalgamation and that this practice of non-acceptance of cultural distinctions must terminate and society must be re-educated to the concept of the tossed salad philosophy rather than the melting pot. (i.e. each element mixed with others while maintaining its own unique flavor making a unique contribution to the total quality of the American experience with no element seen as worse or better than the other.)[1]

"Having a diversity of cultures within a single country can be a threat, a problem, or an asset."[2] Thus steps must be taken to make it an asset. Just because a group of people look at and solve a problem differently doesn't mean they are any better or worse as a

person.

Traditional teacher education programs are not producing people equipped to teach minority group children and youth effectively. If humanizing the curriculum is truely a value in the educational system in twentieth century America then the people for whom the curriculum is designed must be involved.

The official position is that minority group children culturally deprived should be taught middle class values.

> Individuality can only exist in a pluralistic society wherin differences are appreciated and protected

If we are to have relevancy in education and a democratic society, goals and objectives should be based on the cultural values and differencies of the various socio-economic groups of America and reflected in the goals of the total educational system. There should be programs in which the home language and culture of the children are brought into the classroom as an integrated part of the school program. The child needs to learn the language and culture of the school, but the school needs to learn about and appreciate the language and culture of the child as well. Cultural differences involve alternative ways of looking at and doing things.

Teacher competencies have to be specified and must relate to

understanding cultural diversity. A curriculum in order to be successful must represent several cultures, and the development of that curriculum must be by those who represent the diversity of cultures through which the learner must daily maneuver.

Definition of Teacher Competency

Perhaps it would be good and well to define, at this time, what we mean by teacher competency. Competency is reflected primarily in a person's performance of what he does.

A competency may be simply defined as behaviors which effectively satisfy their objectives. Teacher competencies are performances which have been judged to be effective in satisfying the objectives of the teaching profession. Statements of teacher competencies describe what the authorities who have specified them regard as adequate descriptions of a competent teacher. In most teacher education programs the comprehensive set of these statements provide a description of what the judges believe a teacher should look like when he is ready to teach.[3]

Knowing the Community

In order for the teacher to gain community support and maneuver within the students' environment outside the classroom, the teacher should have the ability to maneuver within the community.

Often times little or no effort is made to visit the childs' home and his community to understand the child as a whole.

A teacher should recognize and respect that a community also consists of a government, service agencies, history, language and culture, value system, religion and education.[4] These elements should become part of curriculum as well as influence the teacher's attitude toward his or her students.

A competent teacher, for example of an Indian community should be able to:

* describe the geography, home life, and economics of that Indian community
* describe the services offered by the various community agencies active in the school community
* discuss the tribal government and to name and describe the responsibilities of the officials

In the area of language and culture the competent teacher should be able to:

* tell about the Indian language in comparison to

English

* point out the difficulties that these children have in learning the English language

* talk about the various arts and crafts of the Indian

In history, the competent teacher should be able to:

* give a brief history of that Indian group

* name the great leaders of the past and present and be able to tell about them

Other aspects of the community would be the value system, religion and education and the teacher should:

* describe how a Navajo or Hopi views honesty, punishment, truth telling, rewards, sharing, competition, going against custom

* describe the religion

* differentiate between religious ceremonies that are private and those that are public

* tell the importance of each of the religious ceremonies

* describe the major educational systems on the reservation

* list the advantages and disadvantages of each system

* list the tribal educational goals

* describe the feelings of community members about education

* inform the parents on how they can be involved in

the educational process of their children

The primary purpose of our Navajo-Hopi Teacher Corps Program at Northern Arizona University is to draw more Indians into the field of Indian Education, both on a professional basis and by direct community involvement. All too often the parents of children in reservation schools are not consulted about curriculum changes, staff changes, and other changes in school policy which effect their children daily.

Indian interns can provide effective communication between the parents of the children and the educators and administrators of the school. Indian interns can provide those valuable links precisely because they are Indians, raised in the local culture and speaking the local language.

Pre-service and Inservice Teacher Training

Our pre-service instructional program focuses on giving a total picture of the Indian child in the home and school environment. Emphasis is on the individual in the educational process, emotional, social and cultural factors in the formation of the Indian child. The language section would discuss the problems of the billingual child coming into an entirely new language situation. How the native language depicts the culture and the reciprocal and instruction in basic Navajo and Hopi languages (non-native speaker with reading, with writting, and with analysis for Indian interns.) The socio-cultural would deal with problems in "reaching" children. What are the cultural and social barriers in the way of the Indian child's education? Child development section would include testing and test interpreation with the non-anglo child in mind.

We expect interns from the preservice training to understand the living conditions and cultures on the reservations. The intern will:

* know the history and role of minority groups in America
* become aware of values of Navajo and Hopi culture

* become proficient in culturaliy analyzing minority culture values

* discuss and analyze generally held stereotypes, fears, and misconceptions about minority groups

* understand how white cultural values penalize Indians for their cultural values through culture biased tests

* compare values of white culture, Indian culture, with some other minority culture e.g. Mexican-American, Negro

* have experience in decoding a strange or new language to gain empathy for the problems of minority peoples

Competencies that corpsmembers will exhibit during their internship were developed. In the preparation of the evaluation criteria, several basic considerations were necessary. It was agreed that the criteria for the evaluation should be reflective of desired performance expected of a teacher. In other words, how are teachers expected to perform. The criteria for observation and evaluation have been placed under four general areas of Preparation, Performance, Product (the student), and Personal and Professional Attitudes.[6]

These then become teacher competenies or behaviors expected of teachers. The competencies selected from the many under each area, are those needed to teach culturally diverse and/or culturally different children.

Instructional

The teacher:

* involves students in a variety of relevant activities

* presents alternate methods of instruction when required

* utilize a variety of resources

* uses appropriate remedial material

Community

The teacher:

* welcomes parental and community visitation

* communicates with the community on school matters

* participates in appropriate community activities and organizations

* assesses and/or identifies community attitudes

Student-Teacher Relationship

The teacher:

* exhibits an honest liking and sincere regard for students

* encourages student respect for all cultures

* encourages students to work cooperatively as well as individually

Having resource persons in the classroom who are fluent in the children's language can increase language understanding and use in

a way that encourages children to express themselves.

Learning materials and experiences which reflect the positive social, family and ethnic background of different child-groups within the classroom can do much to build positive self-concept and individual strength in children.

A program that is sensitive to the cultural needs of the children - - that which incorporates important elements of cultural backgrounds of families being served; language, music, holidays, can achieve continuity between the home and the school.

Teacher Competencies for a Multicultural Society

Multicultural education should develop teachers who will deeply respect cultural differences which can contribute positively to American education by providing cultural experiencies and enrichment to other ethnic groups.

The following are some competencies for teachers of culturally diverse children (some of these may be repetitive because they have been touched on in previous sections of the paper, others are additional):

* recognizes that all cultures have the same human needs
* utilizes those materials and resources which promote positive self-concepts
* utilizes those aspects of a student's culture for planning and presenting instruction which will enhance student self-development
* helps students understand their values and attitudes
* recognizes the effects and expectancies of the dominant culture which stifle motivation and learning
* knows about the socio-political characteristics of American society and the local community
* participates with parents and students in designing and evaluating activities

* develops an atmosphere of shared decision-making in the classroom

* encourages individuality and originality

* instills in students an appreciation of human diversity

* encourages student participation and divergent points of view

* in-corporate community resources in the school program

* utilizes community resources in classroom instruction

Competency Based Teacher Education-A Strategy

With this great diversity in culture and individual difference in children and their teachers, it is assumed that institutional resources as a primary basis accreditation must be questioned. Further, we assume that knowledge of subject matter, some teaching methods, and a term of student teaching can no longer be acceptable as a primary basis to predict success of a prospective teacher and the granting of certification. Teacher education does necessitate continuing the combination of knowledge, theory, and practice; however, this education is believed most desirable and most effective in a clinical mode, with a flexible program focusing on the criteria of performance - - performance of competencies expressed in general and specific behavioral objectives.

An ideal program would be:

(1) Specifying basic and specific competencies of teachers and teaching interns within and out of the classroom.

(2) Providing a training program to meet the specific needs of the students.

(3) Continued re-evaluation of curriculum and teaching techniques.

(4) Eventual increased practicum time, through either a longer regular internship or five year program.

(5) Provide a variety of student teaching (intern) laboratory experiences

Competency Based Teacher Education has the potential as a strategy for preparing effective teachers mainly because of its basic characteristics.[7]

* competencies are made public in advance
* the students' rate of progress through the program is determined by demonstrated competency rather than by time or course completion
* instruction is individualized and personalized
* the emphasis is on exit, not on entrance, requirements
* instruction is modularized which allows for self-pacing
* the program is field-centered

In CBTE the learner is the most important element. Flexibility in the scheduling of learning activities is paramount in importance. There are no fixed rules as to how, when, or where learning is to be accomplished. Opportunities are provided to acquire competencies in practical field experience or on the job. The concern is for exit requirements, not entrance requirements. Continunus evaluation, feedback, and revision are integral parts of the program.

Since emphasis is placed on exit rather than entrance requirements, training programs are open for a wide variety of persons entering the

field. With continuous assessment of the progress of each student moving at his own rate and with a variety of choices for a goal, many who would normally have been excluded because of educational assessment, cultural background, race or previous interest can enter and successfully complete a teacher training program. The result can be a whole some diverity of background in the teaching profession.

The goal of CBTE in relationship to multicultural education should be the training of competent educators who are able to relate to the diverse cultures of our society. This training should be designed to develop such unique competencies as an understanding of cultural pluralism, bilingualism, and dialects (in systems where needed, it will require bilingual personnel). Training should also include competencies in cross-cultural curriculum development, community-based education, and the effective areas of learning as it relates to minorities. The goal of CBTE should be to provide the kind of trainees for differentiated staff positions who are supportive of the innovative changes needed for effective educational development.[8]

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